

Friday, November 9th, 2007

Headlines: There's lots to report this week. So, rather than skip lots of stuff to give you paragraphs on a couple of things, I thought I would include everything that crossed my desk at some point, but just give you the headlines. OK, and subheadings. So, here you go:

Veto Override: For the first time of his Presidency, a veto by George W. Bush was overridden by Congress. The bill was the Water Resources Development Act, which is a spending authorization bill. The bill passed the House spending \$15 billion and the Senate, spending \$14 billion. You would think a compromise between the House and the Senate would be somewhere in between. But instead, they "compromised" at \$23 billion. How does that even happen? That's why the President vetoed it and that's why I was one of the (only) 59 people who supported his veto.

Impeach Cheney: Congressman and presidential candidate Dennis Kucinich (D-OH) offered a resolution to debate his proposal to impeach Vice President Cheney. In a twist of the usual, most Republicans agreed that he should be allowed to have the debate, but most Democrats voted to stop the debate. The Democrats position prevailed but not until Kucinich and the Majority Leader exchanged some angry glances.

Quote of the Week: If violence is decreasing in Iraq, it is only because the insurgents "are running out of people to kill," according to House Appropriations Committee Chairman David Obey (D-WI).

President of France: Nicolas Sarkozy addressed a joint session of Congress for the first time as the newly elected President of France. Even though he spoke in French (with simultaneous translation) it was easy to see that he is an excellent speaker with charisma and the power to move people. But more than that, the speech was excellent. The first half of it was probably the best speech I have heard about America in years.....and it wasn't even delivered by an American.

[Here is a link to a clip of the speech](#) if you want to see it. By the way, my high school French didn't help me too much. But I could understand his last words.... vive les Etats-Unis d' Amerique! Vive La France! Vive l'amitie franco-americaine!

Spending Bills: The House and Senate finally got on the same page and passed two of the 12 appropriations bills which will fund the government for the fiscal year, which began over a month ago. The first is the Department of Defense funding bill and it passed overwhelmingly. The President has indicated that he will sign it. The second is the bill to fund Labor and Health, which passed last night after a whole 10 minutes allowed for debate, but it does not appear to have enough votes to override the expected veto. So, the budget stalemate continues.

Free Trade: The first of 4 potential free trade agreements, this one with Peru, passed the House by a vote of 285-132, with my support. In an unusual move, Democrat leadership relied on strong Republican support to pass this trade agreement, as more Republicans voted in support of this bill than Democrats. There are pending agreements with Korea, Columbia, and Panama which may come up next year.

Earmark Outrage of the Week: Late at night, a new earmark was snuck into the Defense

Appropriations bill. It is \$3 million for a golf school for minority children. That's right. \$3 million of your tax money to teach kids to play golf.....out of the DEFENSE budget. The earmark was put in there by James Clyburn (D-SC). Not coincidentally, the money will go to the James E. Clyburn Golf Center. I'm speechless.

The Beginning of the Tax Increase Tsunami: The House today passed the first of many many general tax increases that this Congress is likely to promote. The bill keeps the Alternative Minimum Tax and various other tax provisions where they are today. But the bill also has a number of tax increases on private equity firms, hedge funds, real estate partnerships, vacation homeowners and companies that issue deferred compensation. The vote was 216-193. Fortunately it's unlikely to pass the Senate and faces a presidential veto in any event.

Until next week, I remain respectfully,

Congressman John Campbell